

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Fig. 1 and the addition of Fig. 6. The sheet which includes Figs. 1 and 2 replaces the original sheet including Figs. 1 and 2. The sheet which includes Figs. 5 and 6 replaces the original sheet including Fig. 5.

-- REMARKS --

The present amendment replies to an Office Action dated November 14, 2007. Claims 1-20 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 15 have been amended and claims 21-24 added herein. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-20 on various grounds. The Applicants respond to each ground of rejection as subsequently recited herein and requests reconsideration of the present application.

Drawings

The Examiner indicated that Figure 1 should be designated by a legend such as –Prior Art–. Figure 1 has been revised to include such a legend.

The Examiner objected to the drawings for failing to show every feature of the inventions specified in the claims, specifically, “at least one transistor” as recited in claim 8 and “at least one additional pair of fluorescent lamps” and “at least one additional corresponding striation correction circuit” as recited in claim 10. Figure 6 has been added to show the features specified in the claims. No new matter has been added with the addition of Figure 6.

Withdrawal of the objections to the drawings is respectfully requested.

Claim objections

The Examiner objected to claims 1 and 15 for informalities. Claim 1 has been amended to recite “fluorescent lamp” and claim 15 has been amended to recite “a striation correction circuit” to correct the informalities and not to avoid any cited reference. Withdrawal of the objection to claims 1 and 15 is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejections

A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the . . . claim.

Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co., 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989). Thus, to warrant the §102 rejection, the references cited by the Examiner must show each and every limitation of the claims in complete detail. The Applicants respectfully assert that the cited references fail to do so.

A. Claims 1, 5-9, 11-12, 15-18, and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,701,059 to Steigerwald, *et al.* (the *Steigerwald* patent).

The Applicants respectfully assert that the *Steigerwald* patent fails to disclose, teach, or suggest:

A fluorescent lamp circuit including a striation correction circuit that is arranged to apply a first striation correction current to the first fluorescent lamp and a second striation correction current to the second fluorescent lamp wherein a first voltage appearing across the first fluorescent lamp resulting from the first striation correction current is substantially similar in magnitude and having inverted polarity with respect to a second voltage across the second fluorescent lamp resulting from the second striation correction current, as recited in independent claim 1;

A method of reducing striations in a fluorescent lighting system including applying the first striation correction current to a first fluorescent lamp; and applying the second striation correction current to a second fluorescent lamp wherein a first voltage appearing across the first fluorescent lamp resulting from the first striation correction current is substantially similar in magnitude and having inverted polarity with respect to a second voltage appearing across the second fluorescent lamp resulting from the second striation correction current, as recited in independent claim 12; or

A system for reducing striations in a multi-tube fluorescent lamp assembly including means for applying the first striation correction current to a first fluorescent lamp; means for applying the second striation correction current to a second fluorescent lamp; and wherein a first voltage appearing across the first fluorescent lamp resulting

from the first striation correction current is substantially equal in magnitude and having inverted polarity with respect to a second voltage appearing across the second fluorescent lamp resulting from the second striation correction current, as recited in independent claim 20.

At most, the *Steigerwald* patent discloses parallel impedances Z_{p1} and Z_{p2} connected across lamp 12 and lamp 22, respectively. Starting capacitor C_5 is connected across lamp 22 alone. See FIG. 2; column 3, line 61, through column 4, line 10. The *Steigerwald* patent fails to disclose that the impedances Z_{p1} and Z_{p2} are equal or to suggest that the values of resistors R_{p1} and R_{p2} are equal. Such equal values are unnecessary to generate a small dc current through both lamps and avoid striations. See column 4, lines 9-10. In addition, the starting capacitor C_5 across lamp 22 alone will result in a different voltage magnitude from the first striation correction current across lamp 21 than the voltage magnitude from the second striation correction current across lamp 22. Thus, *Steigerwald* patent fails to disclose substantially similar or equal voltage magnitudes from the striation correction currents across respective lamps as claimed.

Claims 5-9 and 11, and claims 15-18 depend directly or indirectly from independent claims 1 and 12, respectively, and so include all the elements and limitations of their respective independent claims. The Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the dependent claims are allowable over the *Steigerwald* patent for at least the same reasons as set forth above for their respective independent claims.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 5-9, 11-12, 15-18, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the *Steigerwald* patent is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

Obviousness is a question of law, based on the factual inquiries of 1) determining the scope and content of the prior art; 2) ascertaining the differences between the claimed invention and the prior art; and 3) resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art. *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966). To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a

claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974). See MPEP 2143.03. The Applicants respectfully assert that the cited references fail to teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

B. Claims 10 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the *Steigerwald* patent.

The Applicants respectfully assert that the *Steigerwald* patent fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every element of the Applicants' invention as claimed, as required to maintain a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). As discussed in Section A above, the Applicants assert that the *Steigerwald* patent fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a fluorescent lamp circuit including a first voltage appearing across the first fluorescent lamp resulting from the first striation correction current is substantially similar in magnitude and having inverted polarity with respect to a second voltage across the second fluorescent lamp resulting from the second striation correction current, as recited in independent claim 1, or a method of reducing striations including a first voltage appearing across the first fluorescent lamp resulting from the first striation correction current is substantially similar in magnitude and having inverted polarity with respect to a second voltage appearing across the second fluorescent lamp resulting from the second striation correction current, as recited in independent claim 12.

Claim 10 and claim 19 depend directly from independent claims 1 and 12, respectively, and so include all the elements and limitations of their respective independent claims. The Applicants therefore respectfully submit that dependent claims 10 and 19 are allowable over the *Steigerwald* patent for at least the same reasons as set forth above for their respective independent claims.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 10 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the *Steigerwald* patent is respectfully requested.

C. Claims 2-4 and 13-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the *Steigerwald* patent in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0105283 A1 to Murakami, *et al.* (the *Murakami* publication).

The Applicants respectfully assert that the *Steigerwald* patent and the *Murakami* publication, alone or in combination, fail to disclose, teach or suggest each and every element of the Applicants' invention as claimed, as required to maintain a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). As discussed in Section A above, the Applicants assert that the *Steigerwald* patent fail to disclose, teach, or suggest a fluorescent lamp circuit including a first voltage appearing across the first fluorescent lamp resulting from the first striation correction current is substantially similar in magnitude and having inverted polarity with respect to a second voltage across the second fluorescent lamp resulting from the second striation correction current, as recited in independent claim 1, or a method of reducing striations including a first voltage appearing across the first fluorescent lamp resulting from the first striation correction current is substantially similar in magnitude and having inverted polarity with respect to a second voltage appearing across the second fluorescent lamp resulting from the second striation correction current, as recited in independent claim 12. The *Murakami* publication also fail to suggest these elements.

Claims 2-4 and claims 13-14 depend directly or indirectly from independent claims 1 and 12, respectively, and so include all the elements and limitations of their respective independent claims. The Applicants therefore respectfully submit that dependent claims 2-4 and 13-14 are allowable over the *Steigerwald* patent for at least the same reasons as set forth above for their respective independent claims.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2-4 and 13-14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the *Steigerwald* patent in view of the *Murakami* publication is respectfully requested.

New Claims

Claims 21-24 have been added to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the Applicants' invention. Claims 21 and 22, claim 23, and claim 24 depend directly or indirectly on

independent claims 1, 12, and 20, respectively, and so are allowable for at least the reasons as their respective independent claims. No new matter has been added with the inclusion of claims 21-24, which are supported in the specification at least on pages 3-5.

Allowance of claims 21-24 is respectfully requested.

SUMMARY

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-20 and consideration of claims 21-24 is requested. The Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-24 fully satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §§102, 103 and 112. In view of the foregoing, favorable consideration and early passage to issue of the present application is respectfully requested.


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Respectfully submitted,
S. VENKITASUBRAHMANIAN, *et al.*

PHILIPS INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
& STANDARDS
P.O. Box 3001
Briarcliff Manor, New York 10510

Robert J. Kraus
Registration No. 26,358
Attorney for Applicant

CARDINAL LAW GROUP
Suite 2000
1603 Orrington Avenue
Evanston, Illinois 60201
Phone: (847) 905-7111
Fax: (847) 905-7113



Frank C. Nicholas
Registration No. 33,983
Attorney for Applicant